The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch

The Use of Things

We are so prone to grow tired of people and work and ideas and everything when we are not putting the best into what we are doing. The girl next to your office seems to be having the easiest time; the man in the office just ahead of you never seems to be doing anything in the least worth while, and your soul is fretted with longing and wishing you had and hoping that you might. You do not like what you are doing, and the very dreary round of things irritates you. What is the use, after all?

Isn't living one day at a time the hardest thing in the world? Our part in the world is so small, and our ambitions and desires so great, and life is so limited and narrow, that we simply cannot wait for to-morrow and the day after that and the day after them all. We grow impatient, and if we are not saying, "What is the use of living?" are we not crying out with the little maid of a very great play, "Say, what's the use of us, anyway?"

Down a crowded street every day comes a feeble and blind old man. He is hopelessly blind, and the tapping of his stick is not sufficient to guide him through the congested traffic of the city. A very small boy leads him by the hand, and the blind man goes his way content. I have looked often into the face of that child. I have searched for signs of restiveness and weariness against a daily routine of leading here and there by the hand a querulous and afflicted fellow man, but his face is as unruffled and content as days that pass unheeding and uncloded. It is not an easy task; it is surely no great life work, that of leading a blind man by the hand through the streets. What are you doing? Whose eyes are you?

In a narrow frame and written in letters of scarlet is an inscription, "I shall pass through this world but once." There is more to it, but it is unimportant. The use of things is what we can do—what we can mean to the world. You know better than anybody else what your little days mean, what it is that you are tired of, why you don't think that things are worth while, and you are only passing this once.

Some people go through life so cheerful that it is simply aggravating to look at them, and I think they have no more business to be too happy—that is, thrust it upon you—than you have to be down at the mouth and offend the sensibilities of the man you walk downtown with when your coffee wasn't good. Heaven knows, bad coffee is calamity enough, but let the other fellow be happy; his was all right. It isn't to be so bright and smiling; it is only to do the best you can and live to-day. The big to-morrow takes care for itself.

The use of things is what we make it ourselves, and the "use of us" is not nearly so serious a problem as one's innermost soul would have us believe.

BRENT WITT.

Buttermilk as a Food.

According to a recent bulletin issued by the Department of Agriculture, a glass of buttermilk equals in food value two ounces of bread, a good-sized potato or a half-pint of oysters. It thus contains about the same food constituents as skim milk, but it has an added hygienic value, because the protein is more easily prescribed by physicians for children and invalids, especially those suffering from intestinal trouble.

Protein, being the most costly of food ingredients, is the one most likely to be lacking in inexpensive meals, and this is the nutriment which both skim milk and buttermilk supply in a cheap and useful form, and, when taken with bread or used in cooking, they form a nutritious addition to the diet. **Two and one-half quarts of skim milk or buttermilk contains about the same amount of protein as one pound of round steak, and costs about one-quarter as much.**

Two quarts of milk has a greater nutrient value than one quart of oysters. The nutriment in the form of oysters would cost 30 to 50 cents, while the skim milk or buttermilk would have a value on the farm of from 3 to 4 cents.

Hair Dressing.

The classical simplicity of the coiffure is responsible for much bewailing on the part of hairdressers just now. And there's no need to blame it on fear of germs or the good sense of women, said one; it's style, that's all.

In addition to the Apache style, with the hair straight over the brow, a bandeau to keep it in place and a loose coil at the back of the head, there is the style for angelic Edna May, countenances, parted in the middle, loose waves and a simple twist round the crown.

Mlle. Greuse, the noted French beauty actress, whose gowns and mode of hairdressing are copied by the smart set of Paris, is wearing three little curls over each ear and one "follow me" curl over the shoulder. Jewels, flowers of ribbon, and lots of barettes and combs are worn in place of artificial hair. But the white ivory combs, which are sometimes seen in dark hair, look too bizarre for words.

AT A FASHIONABLE DRESSMAKING ESTABLISHMENT

In the April Woman's Home Companion, Grace Margaret Gould, the famous fashion editor of that periodical, writes an article, entitled "A Day in New York With Miss Gould," in which she takes the reader to see the new fashions at a smart modiste's, to Fifth Avenue for afternoon tea, and to Broadway for the theatre. Following is an extract:

"I am sure if you have never been inside one of these very fashionable New York dressmaking establishments you are going to enjoy our first call. Well, it is 11 o'clock when we step into the most exquisite of drawing rooms, in a house just off Fifth Avenue. It is hard to believe it is not a private home of one of New York's society leaders. What could be lovelier than this color scheme of exquisite French gray, the velvet carpet and silken draperies matching in tone? Just see these chairs of gray and silver, and the chandeliers of silver, too, with the lights gleaming through rose-silken shades. Artistic, isn't it?

"The head of this establishment would impress you as a fashion plate, so lithe and straight is her figure, so elegant her costume, if she were not at the same time so much of an artist and so gracious a woman.

She is tact itself. She will not mind in the least if we draw our chairs together and watch for a while just how she conducts her most interesting business. It is far cry from the old experience of going to the dressmaker's to come into this most fashionable establishment.

MAY FASHIONS. L'Art de la Mode.

USEFUL THINGS SEEN IN THE SHOPS

To judge from the quantities displayed, all the feminine world seems destined to add either a fichu or a jabot to their summer costumes. These range in price from 50 cents to $50, according to the quality of material used in their making. One of the newest jabots is of cream color net, accordion plaited, about twenty-four inches long. The ends of this jabot are square, and it is wholly edged with mechlin insertion, not edging, which aids in maintaining the square effect.

A new coat is being shown for young girls. This is of cretonne, in immense wreath pattern. The length of the coat is three-quarters and it is semi-fitting, finished with a flat black satin collar, and patent leather belt. It will appeal more to those who like odd things than to those who seek the beautiful.

The newest of new spring colors is the turquois blue—not the soft pale blue one has been accustomed to in past seasons, but the deep blue green of the turquois, so difficult for the woman of olive tints to wear. A parasol shown in this turquois shade is of moire silk, lined with white China silk; its handle is white enamaled wood, and the knob is silver, thickly set with turquois. There is also shown in this color a combination of the blue with gold, in a scarf of crepe de chine, which is quite plain in the centre. Its ends only ornamented, and these are embroidered in gold thread.

The very latest mode in elbow length gloves is to have them hand painted above the wrist. The most popular decoration is a design of scattered violets or English daisies. These, of course, are painted on the white gloves.

The majority of women, however, are holding to the simple mode of plain white gloves in elbow length, stitched in either all white heavy stitching or in mingled black and white stitching.

A very old-fashioned parasol is shown which has the exact shape of a high, narrow bell. When open its width is less than half of its height. It is so queer in appearance that it creates a rather startling effect. The tall hat of the present style is pleaded in its defens.

The woman who is buying lovely things for her summer home will be interested in the exquisite articles made in French bisque. A cake stand for porch teas is an excellent and charming piece. There are also boxes for women's dressing tables or men's chiffoniers.

These boxes are ornamented with the pink and blue flowers identified with French bisque, and, for women, have also a Cupid design, for men a conventionalized design of lions. The boxes are about thirty inches long and eight inches wide, and have within three compartments, the centre one long enough for ties, or jabots, the smaller compartments for handkerchiefs.

They are sensible and cool for summer, and quite correct for the early hours of the day even in town.

A fascinating gift for the spring bride, is a vase of silver engraved in a pattern of maidenhair fern. These are made in two sizes, and the shape of the vase is just the simple conical form, so satisfactory for flowers.

Handbags still seem irrepressible, though no woman adds to her gracefulness in carrying one; they are, however, somewhat smaller than those of the winter—which is an improvement. For use with summer gowns there are some of pongee silk, with Japanese embroidery in the same color. The clasp and bar top is of Japanese silver. They are also to be had in other colors, but in pale, rather insipid tones.

A bag of different style is in mauve leather, with silk fringe on either side and at the bottom, the fringe exactly matching the leather and about four inches in depth. The all patent leather bags are still used to a slight degree.

Silk stockings are to be had in any number of designs and colors as well as the all black. Those of gorgeous cerise are clocked with black, while white ones with large black dots will be used with the black and white costumes of the season. Some are embroidered in black and white on white groundwork.

Rhinestone ornaments are growing in favor, and are for evening wear only. The hatpins are small, and if well adjusted gleam prettily at night in tulle hats. Large hairpins, of the mode of ten years ago, are to be seen, the pins of silver and the tops set with rinestones. For the same amount a small hand for the hair of closest rhinestones can be procured, with large frills of tulle. These can be worn for theatre coiffure.

How to Get Thin

However we try to persuade ourselves otherwise, however we flatter ourselves we would rather be fat than thin and that flesh is more sightly than wrinkles and bones, there are mighty few women who, deep down in their hearts, do not think flesh a beauty extinguisher.

If you doubt this, why do women half starve, cut out many of the joys of living, exercise when inclination whispers loaf?

Do you think the air would be filled with cures and regimens if merely health and comfort were at stake? A woman will cheerfully pant like a porpoise when she carries too many pounds upstairs, will run the risk of fatty degeneration, diabetes, hardening of the arteries, and kindred ills of overobesity; but tell her she is losing her looks and her figure and she gets in a panic at once and talks cures and systems of reducing all day.

Some one has called embonpoint "that middle-aged monster whose attack once made there is no more balm in Gilead." If that is just "embonpoint"—alias moderate plumpness—what must "fat" be! Nothing short of a raging demon to the woman who finds flesh the bane of her life.

It is funny to hear the things to which women will resort to get rid of their flesh, yet nine out of ten of them evade the real issue. They take all sorts of cures, yet refuse to get down to the root of the trouble and cut out eating and laziness.

The women who exercises hard, gets into a violent perspiration by vigorous walking, goes in for housework, especially sweeping, becomes the fear of the family, plays tennis in summer and squash in winter, rows, rides, climbs mountains, and runs up and down stairs a dozen times a day will rarely have to read up on obesity treatments.

What does she do, even though she may have the menace of an uncomfortably stout ancestry. Usually the woman inclined to flesh is self-indulgent. She much prefers a street car to her feet, groans even at making her bed, never runs an errand she can get out of, and plays bridge to an accompaniment of sweets all the bright days when she should be exercising outdoors.

The fat woman who doesn't like her food is so rare as to be negligible. Just so surely as a thing is fleshmaking does she dote on it. She will eat candy by the pound, nibble cakes whenever she gets a chance, and never by any possibility turn down soups, salads, or dessert. This at least when the flesh is at the controllable stage.

Cretonne Belongings for the Summer Home

What a joy it is, when the warm spring days come 'round, to carry all the stuffy winter draperies and cushions out into the back yard, where they may be treated to a beating and dusting in sun and wind prior to being stowed away until crisp fall weather makes one long for coziness rather than coolness; and to dress up the rooms with gay, fresh cretonnes that put one's very spirits in tune with the season! If the carpets can be taken up and matting substituted so much the better; but if this is impossible, spread linen summer druggets over the heavy carpet, put away most of the bric-a-brac, draw the shades low over open windows, see that fresh flowers and new magazines are in each room and that every couch, chair and cushion shows a smiling cretonne cover and not a stifling velvet, plush or tapestry one.

The first cost of cretonne covers and curtains may seem substantial, but if a good quality is selected the colors will not fade readily and the covers will last through many seasons and tubbings. Greens and browns with a sprinkling of rose tones are most satisfactory in the long run, and if a well covered pattern is selected these tones will harmonize with almost any wall paper except one in decided blue color.

Dainty summer bedspreads are made of flowered cretonne under dotted swiss. The pink or yellow flowers show through the sheer swiss in soft, blurred effect and the edge of the spread may be finished with inexpensive ball fringe. Bureau and table covers of cretonne under dotted swiss may match the bedspread; and chair and couch covers of the cretonne, uncovered, may be used.

Flowered cretonnes are not attractive when the wall paper is much flowered. In such case it is better to use plain materials for curtains, covers and pillows. If cretonne is used it must match the pattern and coloring of the wall paper exactly. There are special papers and cretonnes which come in matching patterns, but though the room papered and curtained in this way seems very dainty and luxurious at first, one soon tires of so much sameness, and the eternal flowers on wall paper, windows, chairs, couch and bed are apt to get on one's nerves.

The cretonne-trimmed screen will prove invaluable to the woman who likes to carry her sewing out to the porch on summer mornings. The screen stands about three feet high and is made of denim tacked to a light wood frame with brass-headed tacks. A brass handle at the top makes it easy to lift the screen about from house to porch or lawn and vice versa. On the crosspieces of the screen, also covered neatly with the denim, are nails and hooks to which may be hung pincussion, needlecase and various bags containing buttons, hooks and eyes and other sewing necessities. The pockets of shirred cretonne across the bottom of the screen are for pieces of material and for finished work, and in the pocket at the top may be kept patterns, scissors, bits of trimming and the like. The shelf on one panel of the screen is a convenient place to lay the sewing implements while at work, and before the screen is carried indoors the shelf is folded back flat against the screen panel.

Another clever porch sewing outfit is made of a large wooden cheesebox. The lid of the box forms the tray at the top, and the big, deep box the lower receptacle. Three light wood uprights hold the trays in position, the boxes being tacked to the uprights from the inside. The cretonne lining of the sewing trays are removable, for laundering, the shirred cretonne being basted to hoops of cardboard which just fit around the inner edge of the trays. The shirred sides of the lining are attached to cretonne circular pieces, the exact size of the bottom of each tray. In the upper tray will be kept the sewing implements, and in the lower unfinished garments, stockings for darning and the like.

The cretonne darning bag is even handier to lift about than the sewing trays, and any housewife will appreciate one of these convenient bags. A strip of cretonne twenty inches wide and forty inches long will make the bag. Double the cretonne and sew up the sides to within six inches of the top. These placket holes are bound with satin ribbon and ribbon ties hold the openings together when the bag is closed. The upper edge of each side of the bag is shirred over a wooden embroidery hoop, and these hoops must first be wound with a satin ribbon.

The bag illustrated is trimmed with two rows of satin ribbon joined by a beading, the outer row of ribbon being set over a frill of still narrower ribbon. This trimming is dainty and effective, but may be omitted if the bag is strictly utilitarian in purpose.

Practical Summer Dresses

With cotton voile, pretty dimities, wash silks and silk and cotton mixtures it is possible to have a collection of dainty summer gowns at a small expense. Such fabrics require simple designs. An inexpensive frock should not have expensive trimmings, nor much of any kind, but should be stylish, neat and appropriate.

Dimity, tissue, white lawns, etc., should be cut with three widths and fitted with tiny pin tucks at the top like a yoke in the back, commencing at each hip, longer and continuing across the back, where they are shorter than at the hips. On the skirt above the hem there may be a deep tuck, three to four inches, a band of embroidered insertion, one of the material cut bias, or of stripes, if the fabric is plain, and vice versa.

Skirts should be of normal heighth, or half an inch higher, the sleeves long, or just below the elbows, and stitched plainly into the long shoulder. The blouse should open at the back with a small round or V-shaped yoke and a high collar of embroidery with a band of the trimming below and on the sleeves. Such a dress is quickly made and easy to launder.

A bordered organdie should have a one-piece skirt two yards and five inches wide sewed to a belt of filet lace picked up at a side and fitted to the figure by clusters of three pin-tucks ten inches deep, with seam at back, with three tiny tucks to head the border and the blouse headed by similar tucks, made on a separate piece and stitched on, with a small round yoke above of filet all-over and stock of the same. The sleeves should be long, with trimming of filet insertion. The blouse should have a few gathers to fit it easily to the belt and a few pin tucks two inches long at the top of the blouse in front, giving a soft fullness over the bust. Add a bow of velvet ribbon sheped like a bow on a pump, with a small bow clasp of pearls, and a pretty frock is achieved.

White fabrics, like lawn, may have a flouncing two yards on the lower edge, and the upper part slightly gathered or in pin tucks. Tucks may be used above the work. Another plan would be to have a tiny peplum of the flouncing around the top, elbow sleeves of flouncing, and a small, round yoke of allover lace. The flouncing could be used for a surplice effect in a blouse, with scallops toward the centre.

Plaid and striped ginghams should be self-trimmed, and the handiest finish for the simple skirt and blouse is a round or pointed collar, belt and cuffs, of white pique, or Turkish toweling made removable.

Wash silks are practical for many reasons. They are now used for a dozen purposes not thought of home time ago. Many women use wash silks for summer underwear, for house gowns, petticoats, and for the frocks that the children dance in on summer evenings, as the lingerie dress is a problem in many places on account of the difficulty of getting good laundresses. Whole gowns of wash silk, as well as shirtwaists, are worn by the sensible woman who is obliged to be out and about a good deal in the heat of summer.

The separate waist, especially when of silk, is an all-around practical detail of the traveler's suitcase. Give a woman a smart coat suit and several waists of silk, and one or two of the lingerie type, and she is ready as a tourist for everything but the smartest hotels at the dinner hour. The ideal waist for a journey is made of Japanese wash silk, plain striped or checked. Women who look out for economies like such waists in plain colors to match their suits, and if the suit is black, a thin black silk waist, made in a pretty style, is smart, if black happens to be becoming.

Interesting Souvenir.

Three of the interesting souvenirs of the Dolly Madison breakfast to be given in Washington May 20 will be a dainty little book which will contain biographical sketches of 300 lines of all the participants in the fete. The work is under the direction of Mrs. Champ Clark, who was also the originator of the biography of the members of the Congressional Club, a publication which never saw light. Much material was got together, but the publication still hangs fire. Mrs. Clark proposes to present her little booklet to all the guests, and it will be a valuable souvenir of the occasion. Mrs. Clark's aim is not to get together a lot of dry figures and statistics, but she wishes to know the accomplishing and capabilities, and one feature is that the subject of every sketch must answer whether she could, if thrown on her own resources, make her own living, and at what occupation. Mrs. Clark has answered that query by the word, cooking.—Exchange.

The Hope Chest.

Every girl should keep a "hope chest," according to an exchange.

The girl who is going to make a good wife will be anxious to train herself, during the years of waiting, for the responsible post she has pledged herself to undertake.

She would not dream of taking a secretaryship without equipping herself with a knowledge of shorthand and typewriting, nor would she apply for the position of teacher without having studied her subjects to some purpose; then why should a girl rush into matrimony—the most serious and responsible situation that it is possible to occupy—without endeavoring to fit herself for the work that lies before her?

Even the girl who is engaged all day can make opportunities of trying her hand at cookery. If she is fortunat enough to be living at home with her parents, she can do a little cookery for the evening meal or on Saturdays or Sunday mornings.

"But I am tired then. Am I to give up my few spare hours?" she ejaculates.

Certainly. Can you not sacrifice something in order to go to the best man in the world as a useful wife, instead of a pretty doll, incapable of cooking him a decent meal if things go wrong and you are left servantless?

Hence, the good, loving, sensible girl will keep a big scrapbook in her "hope box," into which she pastes all sorts of tried recipes, both for cookery and for household affairs.

In fact, that wonderful "hope box" should be prophetic of what her home is going to be like—a sort of kernel around which the house will grow, boasting not only of the daintiest of fancy work articles, but also of those commonsense things with which every home must be furnished before it is a home in the best sense of the word.